

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-15. (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A process of treating milk to ~~promote~~ provide greater aptitude to coagulation of the milk during its transformation into dairy products comprising adding to the milk during its storage, before coagulation treatment, lactic bacteria, said lactic bacteria being *Lactobacillus plantarum* LMG-P-21385, *Lactobacillus plantarum* LMG-P-21389 or a mixture thereof ~~a *Lactobacillus plantarum* strain of lactic bacteria.~~

17. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk in the form of liquid culture.

18. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk in anhydrous form.

19. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk in quantities ranging from 0.1 to 1% of liquid culture with respect to the milk (volume/volume).

20. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 19, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk in quantities ranging from 0.3 to 0.5% of liquid culture in respect of the milk (volume/volume).

21. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk in quantities ranging from 10^{11} to 10^{12} CFU/100 litres of milk.

22. (currently amended) Process as claimed in claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said lactic bacteria ~~strain~~ is added to the milk before pasteurization.

23. (previously presented) Process as claimed in claim 16, further comprising the step of preparing a milk derivative from the milk after said adding step.

24. (previously presented) Process as claimed in claim 23, wherein said milk derivative is cheese or yogurt.

25. (previously presented) A strain of lactic bacteria chosen from the group consisting of *L. plantarum* LMG- P- 21385 and *L. plantarum* LMG-P-21389.

26. (previously presented) The strain of lactic bacteria of claim 25, in combination with one or more different strains of lactic bacteria chosen from the group consisting of *L. plantarum* LMG-P-21385, *L. lactis* subsp. *lactis* LMG-P-21387, *L. lactis* subsp. *lactis* LMG- P-21388 and *L. plantarum* LMG-P-21389.

27. (currently amended) The combination of claim 26, said combination of strains being effective to treat milk ~~for milk coagulation~~ to provide greater aptitude to coagulation of the milk during its transformation into dairy products.

28. (currently amended) Milk containing a strain of *Lactobacillus plantarum* selected from the group consisting of *L. plantarum* LMG-P-21385 and *L. plantarum* LMG-P-21389 ~~strain of lactic bacteria.~~

29. (previously presented) Milk obtained from the process according to claim 16.

30. (previously presented) A dairy product derived from milk according to claim 29.

31. (cancelled)